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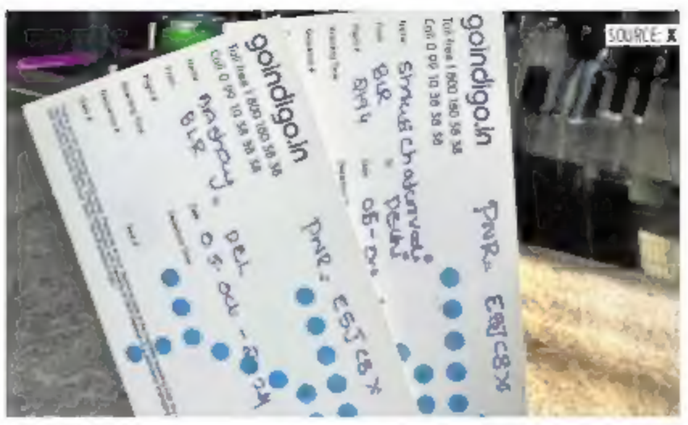

INDIGO SYSTEM FACES OUTAGE

A tech fault at airline IndiGo lasted for more than seven hours leading to long queues for check-ins, baggage drop points at airports across the country. Social media was buzzing with passengers sharing pictures of long queues at airports, handwritten boarding passes. By evening, the system was partially up | P5

NO TALKS

EAM SAYS INDIA WON'T ENGAGE WITH PAK

S Jaishankar, who is scheduled to attend the SCO Summit in Islamabad, said he has no intention of discussing India-Pakistan relations while in that country | P9

WITH THIS ISSUE

THE GHOST HOUSES OF KERALA

PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

Pollsters predict BJP's Haryana exit

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

POLLSTERS on Saturday predicted the exit of BJP in Haryana, giving the Congress a clear majority. They also saw a Congress edge in J&K as it has a pre-poll alliance with the National Conference.

The exit poll results came in shortly after polling concluding in Haryana, where the voter turnout was over 61%. The counting of votes in both states is scheduled for Tuesday, October 8.

In Haryana, the contest was particularly intense, with the ruling BJP facing severe anti-incumbency, having stayed in power for two consecutive terms. The AAP did not appear to have an impact in the state.

Bouyed by the exit poll outcome, former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the decision on chief minister's face will be taken by the party's high command after factoring in the opinions of the party's lawmakers.

Peoples' Pulse gave the Congress an average of 55 seats in Haryana while the BJP was trailing at 26. The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), which was in alliance with the BJP till a few weeks ago, was heading for a washout, as was the Indian National Lok Dal. All exit polls placed the Congress far ahead of the BJP.

In J&K, the C-Voter-*India Today* survey put the National Conference-Congress alliance at 40-48 seats and the BJP at 27-32 in the 90-member assembly. Awami Ittehad Party chief Sheikh Abdul Rashid was courted by Congress leader Charanjit Singh Channi, who called on him at his residence. It led to speculation about the Congress seeking his support for a coalition government.

POLL OF EXIT POLLS FOR TWO STATES

HARYANA — SEATS: 90 | TARGET: 46

Source	BJP	Cong+	IND+	INLD+	AAP	OTH
Axis My India	18-28	51-65	0	1-5	0	3-6
Dainik Bhaskar	19-29	44-54	0-1	1-5	0-1	4-9
Dhruv Research	22-32	50-64	0	0	0	2-8
India Today-C Voter	20-28	50-58	0-2	0	0	10-14
Jan Ki Baat Research	20-37	45-53	0	0-2	0	4-6
Peoples Pulse	20-32	49-61	0-1	2-3	0	3-5
Republic Bharat-Matrize	10-24	55-62	0-2	3-6	0	2-5
Republic TV-P-Marq	21-25	51-65	0	3-6	0	0-0
Poll of Polls	26	55	0	2	0	7

J&K — SEATS: 90 | TARGET: 46

Source	BJP	Cong+NC	PDP	OTH
Axis My India	24-34	35-45	4-6	8-13
Dainik Bhaskar	20-25	35-40	4-7	11-16
Gulistan News	26-30	31-36	5-7	10-17
India Today-C Voter	27-32	40-48	6-12	6-11
Peoples Pulse	23-27	46-50	7-11	4-6
Poll of Polls	27	43	7	13

Online booking mandatory for visiting Sabarimala this season

M S VIDYANANDAN @ T'Puram

ALL pilgrims visiting the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple, including those travelling on the forest routes, will have to make prior online booking during the upcoming *Mandalam-Makaravilakku* season. Also, the daily number of pilgrims visiting the shrine will be limited to 80,000.

The Travancore Devaswom Board's (TDB) proposal to make Virtual Queue booking mandatory for all pilgrims was approved by the high-level committee chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday.

"Virtual Queue booking is mandatory and those coming without prior booking will not be allowed to trek the main Pampa-Sannidhanam route, and also the forest routes from Sathram and Azhutha-Kalaketti. Drinking water and *kanji* (gruel) supply will be arranged on the forest routes," TDB president P S Prasanth told this newspaper. There will be no spot booking facility for pilgrims on any route this year.

Prasanth said the pilgrims will have the freedom to change their route. "Our concern is the daily intake of pilgrims. They are free to change routes," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Won't step down, haven't done anything wrong: CM

RAICHUR: CM Siddaramaiah on Saturday reiterated that he would not step down as CM over the MUDA row as he has not committed any wrongdoing. Speaking to reporters at Manvi in Raichur district, he said the topic of change of guard was speculation. P4

Doc couple saves patient's life on flight

Doctor couple Dr MM Samim and his wife, Dr Naznin Parvin

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

HIGH drama unfolded on an IndiGo flight that had taken off from Bengaluru to Kolkata on Saturday when a flyer in his 40s with preexisting health issues developed an emergency. The flight had three doctors on board and they managed to stabilise him and take him safely up to the Kolkata airport.

Dr MM Samim, who was conferred a gold medal just a day earlier during NIMHANS convocation, and his wife Dr Naznin Parvin, a paediatrician, along with a surgeon from MS Ramaiah Hospital saved the flyer's life. P5

Australian pacer Schutt shines light on queer side of cricket

KALYANI MANGALE @ Dubai

IN the last few years, social media has proved to be a tool for women's cricket. Not just for fan engagement, but to tell stories of athletes.

However, there is a gloomy side that affects the fans and athletes alike, especially the queer athletes. Australia pacer Megan Schutt is one of those players. The 31-year-old has been a proud openly queer player for years now and had to deal with inappropriate comments about her sexuality online. She has never shied away from voicing her opinions, however these days, she has decided to pick and choose who to reply to. "Firstly, I don't call them all out," Schutt said. "The ones that I feel are just trying to poke the bear. I don't engage with them. They're just using a derogatory comment because they can. Sometimes it can be in an uneducated way and that's when I'll probably react because I feel like if we can have a civil conversation and change someone's mindset."

Schutt is not the only queer athlete at the ongoing T20 World Cup in UAE. England's Natalie Sciver-Brunt and Danielle Wyatt-Hodge, New Zealand's Lea Tahuhu, and Scotland's Abbi Aitken-Drummond are some of the openly gay players in this edition of the World Cup. P15

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